

Message Text

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ACTION SS-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 NEA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 SNM-02 SAM-01

SPC-03 DRC-01 RSC-01 L-03 /093 W

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R 090640Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 467

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

S E C R E T BANGKOK 2204

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR

SUBJECT: U.S. DECISION TO GROW OPIUM POPPIES

FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER, DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH, ACTING
ASST SECRETARY HUMMEL FROM AMBASSADOR KINTNER

KUALA LUMPUR FOR ASST SECRETARY INGERSOLL

REF: STATE 26073

1. AT THE CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE LAST NOVEMBER
SECRETARY KISSINGER URGED ALL AMBASSADORS TO CONCENTRATE IN
PARTICULAR ON SPOTTING TROUBLE BEFORE IT OCCURS AND ALERTING
HIM TO WAYS IN WHICH DIFFICULTIES FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY
CAN BE AVOIDED. IN MY OPINION, STATE 26073 SETTING FORTH
THE U.S. DECISION TO PLANT OPIUM POPPIES IS A CLASSIC EX-
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AMPLE OF A DECISION MADE TO ACHIEVE LAUDABLE DOMESTIC OBJECTIVES

BUT EXECUTED IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO JEOPARDIZE IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY INTERESTS.

2. AS YOU KNOW, WE ARE EXERTING STRONG PRESSURE ON THE ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT TO INTERDICT THE FLOW OF OPIATES TRANSITTING THAILAND FROM BURMA AND ENTERING WORLD MARKETS IN HONG KONG AND ELSEWHERE. WE ARE ALSO PRESSURING THE THAI AND WORKING CONSTRUCTIVELY BOTH WITH THE RTG AND THE UN FUND FOR DRUG ABUSE CONTROL TO FIND ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF INCOME FOR HILL TRIBE PEOPLES AND END THE CULTIVATION OF THE OPIUM POPPY IN NORTH THAILAND. THE KING OF THAILAND, WHO IS A KEY ELEMENT IN THE STABILITY OF THIS IMPORTANT NATION, IS VITALLY INTERESTED IN THESE EFFORTS. HE IS DETERMINED TO END THE CULTIVATION OF OPIUM WITHIN THAILAND, BUT FOR SECURITY AND OTHER VALID REASONS BELIEVES IT ESSENTIAL TO DO SO ONLY IN A WAY AND IN A TIME FRAME WHICH PROVIDES ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD FOR THE TRIBAL PEOPLE. OUR DECISION TO PLANT OPIUM POPPIES IN THE UNITED STATES WILL UNDERCUT THE ARGUMENTS WE HAVE BEEN USING WITH HIM AND OTHER KEY THAI AND, RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY, WILL LEAD TO SUSPICIONS THAT WE ARE PRESSURING OTHER COUNTRIES, FAR LESS PROSPEROUS THAN WE ARE, TO END OPIUM PRODUCTION ONLY SO THAT WE OURSELVES CAN PROFIT FROM IT. THOUGH THIS MAY SEEM FAR-FETCHED FROM A VANTAGE POINT OF WASHINGTON, I CAN ASSURE YOU IT IS A VERY REAL DANGER IN THE PRESENT THAI POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT.

3. STATE 26073 HAS ALREADY BEEN SPREAD AROUND THE WORLD, AND CONSULTATIONS HAVE PROBABLY ALREADY TAKEN PLACE WITH SOME FOREIGN GOVERNMENT LEADERS.

4. I RECOGNIZE THAT THE US DECISION NOW EMBARRACES ONLY TESTING AND RESEARCH TO BE SHARED WITH OTHERS, NOT REPEAT NOT PRODUCTION TO MEET DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS. HOWEVER, I DO NOT SEE THAT IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE BEGIN EXPERIMENTAL PLANTING IMMEDIATELY AND THAT WE FORTHWITH ANNOUNCE TO THE WORLD THAT WE ARE ABOUT TO ENGAGE IN POPPY CULTIVATION AS THE FIRST PHASE IN THIS RESEARCH. RATHER WE SHOULD PROPOSE TO GENEVA THAT RESEARCH ON AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY STRAW PRODUCTION SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY SEVERAL

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COUNTRIES AND THAT THIS RESEARCH SHOULD BE COORDINATED WITH THAT OF OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES. IN ORDER TO ASSURE SUCH COORDINATION A COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS SHOULD BE FORMED SO THAT MODES OF COORDINATED RESEARCH WOULD BE DEVELOPED AND REPORTED BACK TO THE INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS. THE DECISION TO BEGIN THE PLANTING AND THE TESTING COULD THEN BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS OR ELSE A COORDINATED PLAN COULD BE DEVELOPED AND SUBMITTED TO THE 1975

MEETING OF THE UN COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS. UNDER THIS DELAYING SCHEME AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE CLIMATE COULD BE ESTABLISHED EITHER TO BEGIN THE US PLANTING BY MAY 1974 (AS WELL AS SOME PLANTING ELSEWHERE) OR THE US PLANTING COULD BE POSTPONED TO THE SPRING OF 1975. ALTHOUGH I AM NOT PRIVY TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENTAL STOCKPILE OR THE ACTUAL AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL OPIATES IN THE US, I ASSUME THAT THE DELAY SUGGESTED WOULD NOT SERIOUSLY AFFECT THE SAFE LEVEL OF US INVENTORIES OF OPIATES. BUT AT LEAST FROM THE VANTAGE OF THAILAND, THE MODE OF PHASING INTO THE POPPY CULTIVATION AND RESEARCH TESTING WOULD BE FAR EASIER TO EXPLAIN AND TO GAIN ACQUIESCENCE FROM THE RTG. THE FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS OF THIS MATTER SEEM TO BE IMPORTANT AND SHOULD PROVIDE TWO SALIENT LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE. (A) FIRST, A DECISION OF THIS NATURE, AFFECTING A MAJOR ELEMENT IN U.S.-THAI RELATIONS, SHOULD NOT BE MADE WITHOUT GIVING US A CHANCE TO OFFER OUR VIEWS, INCLUDING POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM. AS IT NOW STANDS WE ARE FACED WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI ON A MATTER WHICH COULD WELL ENDANGER OUR IMPORTANT INTERESTS IN THAILAND. THIS SHOULD NOT HAPPEN. (B) SECONDLY, LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE, IT WILL BE AN EASY STEP TO SHIFT FROM PLANTING PROPPIES FOR "TESTING AND RESEARCH" TO PLANTING THEM FOR PRODUCTION. ONCE THE FIRST OLIVE COMES OUT OF THE BOTTLE, SHIFTING INTO ACTUAL PRODUCTION MAY BE REGARDED BY DOMESTIC POLICY MAKERS AND PHARMACEUTICAL FIRMS AS A ROUTINE DECISION. I CAN ASSURE YOU IT WOULD NOT BE SO REGARDED HERE AND URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THIS SITUATION AND KEEP THIS EMBASSY AND OTHERS DIRECTLY CONCERNED CLOSELY INFORMED. WHEN AND IF A DECISION IS MADE TO GO BEYOND TESTING AND RESEARCH, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT OUR VIEWS BE SOUGHT AND HEEDED IF WE ARE TO AVOID DAMAGE TO IMPORTANT INTERESTS OVERSEAS.

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5. MEANWHILE, BEFORE CROSSING THAT BRIDGE, I URGE THAT THE FOCUS OF DISCUSSION ON ITEM 9 AT THE FEBRUARY 18 GENEVA AND MEETING BE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SUBJECT, FOLLOWED BY THE APPOINTMENT OF A MULTINATIONAL EXPERT COMMITTEE RATHER THAN THE UNVEILING OF A UNILATERAL US DECISION TO BEGIN PLANTING POPPIES BETWEEN "ROW ON ROW" OF FOREIGN POLICY CROSSES. KINTNER

NOTE BY OC/T: DISTRIBUTION COORDINATED WITH MR. KURZE, S/S-O.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUG CONTROL, OPIUM, NARCOTICS, DRUG TRAFFIC, AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BANGKO02204
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740244/aaaabowv.tel
Line Count: 165
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: STATE 26073
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <02 JAN 2003 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S. DECISION TO GROW OPIUM POPPIES FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER, DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH, ACTING
TAGS: SNAR, TH, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005